United States Department of Agriculture
Soil Conservation Service
Boise, Idaho

Magnar Basin Wildrye

MAGNAR BASIN WILDRYE

Magnar, an improved variety of basin wildrye, is a cool season, perennial bunchgrass native to much of the Western United States. It was once a very important winter forage plant of the Western rangelands, but overgrazing greatly reduced or eliminated it. The name denotes great or large.

Magnar was released in 1979 by the Soil Conservation Service and the University of Idaho Agricultural Experiment Station.

Adaptability

Magnar is well adapted to southern Idaho, northern Utah, and Nevada. It grows in areas with an average annual precipitation of 8 to over 16 inches. It is adapted to irrigation throughout the region. Although Magnar has a broad soil texture adaptation, it does not do well on coarse textured or shallow soils. It has good tolerance to salt and alkali.

Uses

Magnar is a good erosion control plant. It is useful for stabilizing gullies and banks of dry washes. It can be used as a grass windbreak for wind erosion protection or to control blowing snow.

Magnar may also be used as a component in mixtures to reseed rangelands, minespoils, and other disturbed areas. It is well adapted to phosphate minespoil reclamation in southeastern Idaho.

Another good use of Magnar is for wildlife food and cover. It provides excellent nesting, roosting, escape cover, and food for pheasants. Other birds and small rodents also eat the large seeds.

Under irrigation, Magnar can produce as much as 10 tons per acre of dry weight forage. It makes excellent standing winter grazing for livestock. It also has potential as chopped green feed or silage.

Seeding Recommendations

Plant on weed-free, firm seedbed, in early spring or late fall. Seeding after June 1 or before September 1 may cause failure even with irrigation. Magnar establishes slowly and should not be grazed or cut until late summer or fall of the second growing season.

It is recommended all plantings be made on a Pure Live Seed (PLS) basis at the following rates when seeded alone:

Row Spacing (inches)	Pounds PLS (per acre)	Total Seed per Linear Foot Drill Row
6	18	26
12	9	26
24	5	29
36*	3.5	30
48*	3.0	34

*Seed production, wildlife, or windbreak plantings

Seed Production

Seed production fields should be seeded in rows 36 to 48 inches apart to permit access for machine tillage, hand roguing, and weed control. Seed is best harvested as soon as mature by direct combining with the platform set high to get most of the seed and as little green growth as possible. Seed must be dried immediately after combining.

Seed Availability

Breeders and foundation seed are mantained by the Plant Materials Center at Aberdeen, Idaho. Foundation seed may be obtained through soil conservation districts in Idaho, Nevada, and Utah; University of Idaho Research and Extension Center; and Utah Crop Improvement Association.

The Soil Conservation Service operates and maintains one of its 23 plant materials centers at Aberdeen, Idaho. Special emphasis is placed on finding suitable plants for erosion control on soils and sites where it is difficult to establish protective vegetative cover.

Plant materials are a significant component of about two-thirds of the conservation practices that farmers, ranchers, and others find essential to the solution of erosion and sedimentation problems. It is SCS policy to assemble, evaluate, release, and distribute for commercial increase, new or improved plant materials needed for resource conservation and development.

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